United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in Presidential Statement, expresses concern about Decree of Russian Federation Supreme Soviet that Sevastopol is Russian; says Decree contravenes 1990 Kiev Treaty and United Nations Charter and is without effect.

+ Croatian and Serbian delegations resume negotiations on cease-fire agreement in Vienna; UNPROFOR says meeting provides opportunity for lasting peace in Croatia.

+ Armenian Foreign Minister says peaceful resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is driving principle of his country's foreign policy; Armenia has no territorial claims on Azerbaijan and no army fighting on its territory.

+ Italian military officer appointed to Office of Under-Secretary-General for Peace-Keeping Operations; will work under Military Adviser on liaison between Headquarters and UNOSOM II.

+ Economic Committee of Economic and Social Council told that 14 million people have AIDS virus, 2.5 million have disease; Social Committee approves 14 drafts dealing with illicit drugs.

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The Security Council, in a statement read out by its President, Sir David Hannay (United Kingdom), today said it shared Ukraine's concern concerning the 9 July Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation that the city of Sevastopol was Russian. In that context, the Council welcomed the Russian Foreign Ministry's position that the Decree departed from the policy of the President and Government of the Russian Federation.

The Council reaffirmed its commitment to the territorial integrity of Ukraine, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The Council recalled that in a Treaty signed at Kiev on 19 November 1990, the Russian Federation and Ukraine had committed themselves to respect each other's territorial integrity within current frontiers. The Supreme Soviet's Decree was

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incompatible with that commitment, as well as with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and was without effect, the Council said.

The Council welcomed the efforts of the Presidents and Governments of the Russian Federation and Ukraine to settle any differences between them by peaceful means and urged that they take all steps to avoid tension.

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High-level Croatian and Serbian delegations met today in Vienna to resume negotiations on a bilateral cease-fire agreement. The negotiations, which are expected to end late tomorrow or early Thursday, are being held under the auspices of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and chaired by the Chief Military Observer, Brigadier-General Bo Pellnas.

The negotiations are being conducted on the basis of previous consultations with both sides, in particular the Topusko meeting of 18 May, according to an UNPROFOR press release. They will also build on the agreement signed by Serbian and Croatian representatives on 15 and 16 July, which established conditions for resuming operation of the Maslenica Bridge, Zemunik Airport and Peruca Dam.

The meeting is the best opportunity to reach an agreement that might serve as the basis for a lasting peace in Croatia, UNPROFOR said. An agreement is vital to further talks on matters of urgent concern to both sides, including the restoration of public services so that normal life can resume in the region. Also involved are legal and defence issues essential for mutual confidence-building, with a view to the implementation of Security Council resolution 847 (1993). All such peace-building measures depend on a cease-fire agreement being signed as soon as possible.

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Armenian Foreign Minister Vahan Papazian today said that the driving principles in his country's foreign policy were the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, the normalization of relations with its neighbours and integration into the international economic system. He told correspondents that Armenia's position on Nagorno-Karabakh had been clear and consistent: the conflict was between the people of the region, who were striving for self-determination, and the Government of Azerbaijan, which was refusing to recognize their legitimate rights and security concerns.

Mr. Papazian stressed that Armenia had no territorial claims on Azerbaijan and had no army fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh or on any Azerbaijani territory. However, Armenia did provide humanitarian assistance to the people of the region, and could not accept a military solution to the conflict which would mean the annihilation or deportation of the Armenian population.

Armenia fully supported Security Council resolution 822 (1993), which called for an end to hostilities in the region, and regarded the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) "nine plus one" initiative as a real

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opportunity to establish peace, Mr. Papazian continued. Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh had agreed to the terms of the initiative, but the recent domestic turmoil in Azerbaijan raised serious questions about the commitment of the new leaders in Baku to the peace process. He went on to say that Armenia firmly believed that an unconditional cease-fire, to be followed by negotiations, was the only way to bring lasting peace to the region.

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Lieutenant-Colonel Salvatore Ioccono Quarantino, an Italian military officer, is to join the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Peace-Keeping Operations, according to a United Nations spokesman. Lieutenant-Colonel Quarantino will work under the Military Adviser, Major-General Maurice Baril, on liaison between Headquarters and the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II).

The spokesman said the timing of the appointment was "not unrelated to current events", but noted that it was not unusual for officers from troop-contributing countries to spend some time at Headquarters with the Military Adviser. Lieutenant-Colonel Quarantino's appointment would probably last a minimum of six months.

Last week, Under-Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the Italian contingent serving with UNOSOM II had refused to accept certain tasks assigned to it, and expressed the hope that it would soon be redeployed in the interest of unity of command. Mr. Annan also said he expected that Italian force Commander Brigadier-General Bruno Loi would be "rotated" back to Italy. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has since maintained close contact with the Italian Government to resolve the matter.

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Some 14 million people have been infected by the virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and 2.5 million have gone on to develop the disease, Dr. Michael Merson, Executive Director of the Global Programme on AIDS of the World Health Organization (WHO), told the Economic Committee of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva on Friday. Most infections occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, but the fastest increase in the past year had been in Latin America and in South and South-East Asia, he said.

Heterosexual transmission was on the rise, and five out of 11 newly infected adults were women, Dr. Merson continued. By the year 2000 there would be 30 to 40 million people infected with the virus and 90 per cent of them would be in developing countries. The representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) noted that since the Council had discussed AIDS last year, 2 million people had been infected in developing countries, most of whom were responsible for the support of others.

Meanwhile, the Economic and Social Council's Social Committee approved 14 draft resolutions dealing with narcotic drugs. Under one draft, the Council would endorse the view of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

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that the non-medical use of such drugs should not be legalized. Other drafts dealt with such issues as reducing demand for drugs and implementing the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

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